

Ukraine's Participation in the Bologna Process: Has it Resulted in More  
Transparency in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions?

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In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Ukraine finds itself in a complex position as it continues with the post-Soviet transition. The country faces tasks of national identity formation and nation building. Due to its location at the geopolitical crossroads between Russia to the East and the European Union to the West, Ukraine is also faced with the need to assert its independence and to strategically reposition itself within the contexts of globalization.

Education, and particularly higher education, is central in addressing these strategic objectives. Having joined the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukraine hopes to strengthen its relationships with the EU through participation in European Commission-sponsored projects, and to increase its own research capabilities and build the capacity of its higher education system. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, higher education has become one of the most corrupt areas in Ukraine.

This paper analyses the impact of the Bologna Process reforms on Ukrainian higher education institutions. It explores Ukrainian educational policies during 2005-2009 period and aims to answer the question of whether the Bologna Process agreements have resulted in more transparency within Ukraine's higher education institutions.

Key Words: Ukraine, Education, Reform, Bologna Process, Policy

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## Introduction

Ukraine began its transition to a market economy shortly after gaining its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Today, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Ukraine finds itself in a complex position as it continues with the post-Soviet transition. The country faces tasks of national identity formation and nation building. Due to its location at the geopolitical crossroads between Russia to the East and the European Union (EU) to the West, Ukraine is also faced with the need to assert its independence and to strategically reposition itself within the contexts of globalization. On the one hand, Ukraine for the first time in its history functions as an independent state. On the other hand, as the world is becoming smaller and more interconnected in the age of globalization, Ukraine sees its future within the frameworks of collaborative concerted responses to global market forces – through its cooperative agreements with EU (and its hopeful but questionable prospect of EU membership) and Russia.

Education, and particularly higher education, plays an important role in addressing Ukraine's strategic objectives. The government of independent Ukraine as early as 1991 viewed its system of education as a central element of the nation building process (Verhovna Rada, 1991; Education Act, 1996; State National Program 'Education,' 1994; National Doctrine, 2002). With the European integration and formation of the European Union in 1993 and creation of the European Higher Education Area under the Bologna Process agreements of 1999, the task of reforming the Soviet educational system was enlarged to include the global repositioning and local relevance of Ukraine's educational system within the context of the Bologna Process reforms (Na-

tional University of State Tax Service of Ukraine, n.d.).

Having joined the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukraine hopes to strengthen its relationships with EU through participation in European Commission-sponsored projects, and to increase its own research capabilities and build the capacity of its higher education system (European Commission, 2009; Koval, 2007; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006; Kremen, 2004; Makogon & Orekhova, 2007; OECD, n.d.). However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, higher education has become one of the most corrupt areas in Ukraine (Osipian, 2008; Pasechnik, 2009). One wonders whether Ukraine's own post-Soviet reforms in the context of larger, European reforms, will result in more transparency and less corruption in higher education institutions (HEIs).

This paper analyses the impact of the Bologna Process reforms on Ukrainian HEIs during the 2005-2009 period that immediately followed the Orange Revolution of 2004-2005. It aims to answer a question of whether or not these reforms resulted in more transparency within Ukraine's HEIs. Although concerned with the issue of corruption in Ukraine's higher education (Valentino, 2007; Osipian, 2008), this paper does not directly address it and focuses only on analyzing Bologna process mechanisms as the means of affecting transparency within HEIs. It explores whether the Bologna agreements rendered formulation of new national policies, particularly policies that are aimed at creating an atmosphere of transparency and an internal culture of quality in HEIs. It compares and contrasts Bologna process goals with goals for higher education reforms as articulated in Ukraine's government documents, policy briefs, reports submitted as part of the Bologna Process, addresses by the key figures in

Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Sciences (MES), and reflections of leaders of the HEIs that were actively involved in the European Commission funded projects under its Trans-European Mobility Program for University Studies (Tempus program, n.d.).

### **Context of Post-Soviet Ukraine: A Country in Transition**

A young democracy, Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, after centuries of domination by Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman and Russian Empires, and most recently the USSR. It is located in Eastern Europe and borders Romania, and Moldova to the south; Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland to the West, Belarus to the North, and Russia to the East. It is strategically located at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and is the second largest country in Europe (The World Factbook, 2009). During the Soviet era, Ukraine was second to Russia in its contribution to the Soviet Union's economy. Following the country's independence, the government set out to liberalize its state-run economy and political system by aligning them with the values of market capitalism and democracy.

Ukraine's foreign policy towards Euro-Atlantic integration and the 2009 EU decision to launch its Eastern Partnership initiative are critical to sustaining Ukraine's progress in meeting its strategic goals (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2009). However, between 2005 and 2009 Ukrainian people and the world witnessed a long-lasting political infighting between President Yushchenko and the Prime Minister Tymoshenko, former 2004 Orange Revolution allies. It created a deep sense of uncertainty, as Ukraine's ability to make fruitful steps in this direction highly depends on individual political players and contributed to a slow pace of democratic reforms within

the country (Telpukhovska, 2006). Despite the uncertainty, at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Ukraine's economy was booming due to a global demand and high prices for steel. However, declining steel prices and the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 in addition to the internal political turmoil have brought the country's economy close to the point of national default (World Factbook, 2009). The situation in Ukraine's education system reflects the larger crisis.

### **Educational System of Ukraine**

Ukraine has a centralized national system of education, which includes educational levels, from preschool through the Ph.D. (System, 2001; European Commission, n.d.). As with many nation-states, education plays a central role in the nation building process of the young Ukrainian state. There is a double pressure on the educational system to not only inculcate its citizens with what it means to be Ukrainian, but to also discover and recover from the nation's cultural and religious traditions its identity as an independent nation. Additional pressures arise from the global context discussed above. The Ukrainian system of education faces goals of remaining relevant in how it prepares citizens for life in the new realities of a global economy (Bastero, Bathuag, Prates, & Pryrula, 2009; Etokova, 2005) as well as the need to rethink its philosophy (and purposes) of education and embrace the transformational goals articulated in the Bologna Process agreements.

#### *Needed shift from skills-focused to competencies-focused higher education.*

The present system of higher education inherited from the Soviet Union a great emphasis on the theoretical. Even in applied fields as economics and business studies that are in high demand in Ukraine's labor market, students acquire in-depth theoretical

knowledge that is often not accompanied by the development of practical skills (Gorobets, 2008). This reality is complicated by the cultural value of having in one's possession a degree document, regardless of the depth and quality of actual knowledge and competencies a person may in fact display (Hofstede, 1986; Gorobets, 2008). This cultural value plays an important role in a widely spread "diploma mills" phenomenon and other corrupt practices in Ukraine's higher education (Johns, 2004; Osipian, 2008; Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). Multiple accounts have been documented about the dollar amounts in bribes such degrees may cost (Belyakov, Cremonini, Mfusi, & Rippner, 2009; Pasechnik, 2009)), and corruption schemes were recently uncovered that involved MES employees and even a former vice-minister of education.

*Overdue reform in quality assurance (assessment, licensing and accreditation) practices.*

In addition, the current practices of quality assurance are also a source and arena of corruption (Osipian, 2008). External quality assurance takes place in the form of state-controlled accreditation of institutions and program licensing by the MES. The process lacks the transparency and accountability normally found in the evaluation mechanisms within independent accrediting agencies in the USA and other countries. It is often used as an avenue for extortion and control of competition (Hallak, J. & Poisson, M., 2007), particularly against a growing number of new private institutions that are perceived as a threat by the state-run institutions (Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). Internal quality assurance mechanisms and academic rewards systems are not based on international standards common to developed democracies (Schiermeier, 2006). As publication in international peer-reviewed journals

and conference participation do not serve as a basis for an academic career, Ukrainian higher educators are not motivated to develop professionally, including learning the foreign languages necessary for conducting research and literature reviews in other languages (Gorobets, 2008; Osipian, 2008) and for hands-on research and educational collaboration with the international research community.

*Declining Quality of Ukraine's Higher Education and Post-Soviet Reforms*

Since its independence, Ukrainian HEIs have seen an increase in student population. The number of private higher educational institutions is growing, as is the number of graduates holding Ph.D degrees (Gorobets, 2008). However, the quality of higher education has declined. Ukraine's economic crisis of the 1990's led to a decline in the financing of education, including research and development (Gorobets, 2008). Despite the sharp growth in the number of graduate students and persons with Ph.D. degrees, the number of researchers per 1,000,000 inhabitants in Ukraine continued to decline (Gorobets, 2008). The economic crisis has had a tremendous negative impact on the educational system of Ukraine leading to the mass immigration of educated people (Gorobets, 2008) and the marketization of higher education. These factors, combined with the increasing levels of corruption in Ukrainian society, Soviet-style higher education, and lack of transparency mechanisms in Ukrainian higher education at all levels, have led to skyrocketing corruption in higher education, declining quality, and to the education that is not able to prepare a young person for life in a new, democratic Ukraine and in an increasingly global world.

Thus, as Ukraine became in 2005 one of the signatory members of the Bologna Process, it was not only faced with the tasks

of aligning the Soviet-style programs, structure, and processes within its system of higher education along the Bologna principles and mechanisms. It was also needed to transform the internal culture within its system of higher education from autocracy, corruption, and academic stagnation to democracy, transparency, academic rigor, innovation, and cross-border collaboration. The next section presents the aspects of the Bologna Process which could serve as external motivators for such a cultural change within Ukraine's HEIs. It also analyzes how these factors are being understood and whether they rendered educational policy decisions aimed at creating internationally acceptable transparency mechanisms and at developing an internal culture of quality in Ukrainian higher education institutions.

### **Bologna Process Mechanisms with Potential to Increase Institutional Transparency of Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions**

What is known today as the Bologna Process is a result of the 1999 concerted decision by the European nations to address the changing role and realities of higher education in the globalization era. European nations agreed to preserve the value of higher education as a public good and to prevent it from being reduced to merely another commodity in global markets. Today, the Bologna Process has 46 signatory countries, which include EU members and non-EU partner states. As it is stated on the Bologna Process web portal, a key to success of the reforms is that the process involves such international entities as the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, as well as representatives of HEIs, students, staff, employers and quality assurance agencies (Bologna Process, 2007).

### *Principles and Main Components of the Bologna Process*

The aim of the Bologna Process is to undertake a series of higher education reforms in EU and partner nations that, by 2010, led to the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Foundational principles of the EHEA are international cooperation and academic exchange among European students and staff as well as among students and staff from other parts of the world. It was envisaged that the EHEA would:

- facilitate the mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom (Bologna Process, 2007).

### **Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process**

Although each of these key aspects of the Bologna Process reforms have the potential to increase the transparency in Ukraine's HEIs, the quality assurance component is critical to the external transformation of Ukraine's educational system, as well as of its internal culture (Brief, n.d.; Tempus program, n.d.; Tempus program, 2008). From reading the Bologna Process documents, an interesting observation can be made that there is no division between external and internal transformation. The process seems very holistic in nature and has an underlying value of education as a public good. However, what comes clear from reading Ukrainian documents (both government communiqués, as well as authored publications) that analyze and address the progress of the Bologna

Process in Ukraine, is language that reflects external, mechanistic compliance that is not accompanied by an emphasis on the internal transformation of values and culture in Ukraine's higher education system. This external-internal tension can be possibly explained by the dramatic commoditization of Ukraine's higher education that took place after 1991, as a result of market reforms, decreased financing of higher education, and rampant corruption. Thus, Europe and Ukraine entered the Bologna Process with different sets of values (Bologna Process, n.d.; Nyborg, 2003). Therefore, although every aspect of the Bologna Process can contribute to the transparency of Ukrainian higher education, quality assurance is the only Bologna Process mechanism that is powerful enough to address external compliance with Bologna Process standards (or *modernization*, as it is often defined in Ukrainian documents) and lead to the internal transformation of the system's values from autocratic to democratic.

The Bologna Process web site defines the meaning of the term "quality assurance" in higher education as "all the policies, ongoing review processes and actions designed to ensure that institutions, programmes and qualifications meet and maintain specified standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure" (Bologna Process, 2007). It provides higher education institutions and stake holders accountability mechanisms that guarantee certain levels of educational quality, as well as serves as an instrument for "enhancement and improvement of higher education system, institution, or programme" (Bologna Process, 2007).

In 2008, the participating countries created the first legal entity of the Bologna Process, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), a register of national quality assurance agencies. European Standards and Guidelines for

Quality Assurance serve as operational criteria for EQAR and for membership in the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and provide information on quality assurance agencies that meet the standards of the common European framework (Bologna Process, 2007).

#### *Quality Assurance Implementation within the Bologna Process*

Quality assurance within the Bologna Process framework is implemented through establishing national qualification frameworks that fit the overall European qualification framework for the three-cycle system; through development of national independent accreditation agencies that must meet shared standards and be members in ENQA and be reflected on the European Quality Assurance Registry; and through the process of external and internal evaluation in HEIs. Qualifications frameworks describe the qualifications of an education system and how they interconnect. National qualifications frameworks describe learning outcomes for each qualification and how learners can move from one qualification to another within a system. National qualifications frameworks are compatible with the European Qualifications Framework adopted in 2005 by the participating nations (Crosier, Purser, & Smidt, 2007).

#### *Reforms of Ukraine's Higher Education under the Bologna Process: Clash of Values*

Analysis of Ukrainian sources (Bologna Process, 2009; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006; NUSTSU, n.d.; Shynkaruk, n.d.) indicates the presence of explicitly articulated purposes for educational reforms under the Bologna Process, as well hidden goals (The Bologna Process in Central Europe, n.d.).

The documents state the importance of higher education to build Ukraine as a nation and democratic society, to increase

the nation's competitiveness in the knowledge-based global economy, and to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies (Bastero, Bathuag, Prates, & Prytula, 2009). At the same time, the texts indicate a concern about a possibility for Ukraine being left behind and a need to catch up (Shynkaruk, n.d.). The notion of catching up comes across very strongly when analyzing the language used to describe the importance of and ways to comply with the Bologna Process. This catching up seems to equate with external changes: mechanistic compliance with the "Bologna requirements" (Rashkevych, 2008), without actually embracing the set of values behind the Bologna Process that view education as a public good and a force for development and empowerment in the fast changing age of globalization. The documents tend to use such terms as "Bologna Process requirements," when, in reality, these are *agreements*. They seem to not communicate at all the Bologna Process value of education as a public good (Nyborg, 2003) and often reduce the essence of Bologna reforms to a set of standards (ECTS, QA, etc.) to comply with. Whether this is a language issue, operationalization of the reform language by the still prevailing Soviet "apparatchik" (member of the autocratic administrative structure) mentality, or a misunderstanding of the central role of the values stated in the Bologna Process, such oversight leads to nothing less than miscommunication of the goals of the Bologna Process reforms and their substitution by Ukraine's own nation building goals (Telpukhovska, 2006; Tempus Program, n.d.; Shestavina, n.d.). Sadly, there is a sense that these goals may be seen as competing, when in fact, national goals could be seen as an integral and complementary part of the European reforms and the goals of the European reform, in turn, could be seen as integral to Ukraine's nation building goals.

This may be due to the fact that Ukraine joined the process only in 2005, as opposed to being there in 1999, and did not take part in the values-based development of the process (Rashkevych, 2008). However, when communication of the reform goals does not relate the language of values and does not communicate their global context and nature, reforms are often met with resistance by Ukrainian higher educators (Rashkevych, 2008; Telpukhovska, 2006). The exception is the schools where leadership has had exposure to Western education, is fluent in English, and has capacity to understand and interpret the global dynamics that inform the Bologna Process reforms (including the benefits for Ukraine).

The following is a mini-case study of attempted reforms in quality assurance in Ukraine's higher education system. It analyzes the MES formal 2009 report to the Bologna Process, contrasts it with issues raised by the Minister of Education and Science, and with the goals set for further reforms in Ukraine's higher education through the European Commission's Tempus program (Tempus Program, 2008; Usher, 2009). In his 2008 address regarding Ukraine's progress in the Bologna Process, the Minister of Education and Science, Ivan Vakarchuk, indicated the system's resistance to change, expressed his concern with this clash of cultures, and called for a real change (Vakarchuk, 2008).

#### *The Level of Quality Assurance Reforms in Ukraine's Higher Education*

Ukraine's 2009 Bologna Process report (Bologna Process, 2009) was completed using a standard template. It addressed the ways the country meets the Bologna Process goals for quality assurance reforms (Rauhvargers, 2004; Reyes, Candeas, Reche, & Galan, 2008; Sellin, 2007; SCQ, 2009). The report indicates that Ukraine has reformed

its National Qualification Framework to meet the European standards. However, Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuk (Vakarchuk, 2008) indicated the irony of the “simplification” that grew the number of qualifications from 76 to 146. According to the report (Bologna Process, 2009), Ukraine has reformed the process of accreditation to meet the guidelines and standards of the Bologna Process. It states that Ukraine has created a state-independent accrediting agency. However, the independence of this state-controlled agency is in fact questionable, as in a government-independent accreditation agency, in a culture that heavily depends on relational networks, the risk is high that it would be dependent on individuals who are affiliated with the main state-run universities (Osipian, 2008; Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). The report also indicates that Ukraine has in place mechanisms for external and internal evaluation. However, the issue of internal evaluation and, in particular, creating an internal culture of quality, was stated as one of the key priorities for the current Tempus IV funding cycle in the domain of structural reforms in Ukraine’s higher education (Brief, n.d.; Joint European Projects, n.d.; Tempus Program, 2008; Tempus Program, 2009). It appears that the report interprets as internal quality assurance the process of internal reviews conducted during the accreditation (and re-accreditation) process. There is no indication of the ways of addressing institutional culture and mechanisms that would emphasize codes of ethics, institutional transparency, and an internal culture of quality. Some of the ideas about the ways to increase institutional transparency are articulated by the education minister Ivan Vakarchuk (Vakarchuk, 2008).

*Direction articulated by the Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuk.*

In his 2008 address to the MES collegiums on the Bologna Process progress, the minister stressed the need for authentic reforms that moved beyond external compliance with the Bologna Process ECTS and that focused instead on getting educational programs to meet the standards and achieve authentic compatibility (and comparability) with the Bologna Process’s three cycles of higher education. He emphasized the need for institutional autonomy of Ukraine’s HEIs from a tight control by the MES structures as instrumental to development of initiative, capacity, and creativity. Currently, as a result of the higher education reforms, there are three types of universities based on the level of their autonomy from the national government. The majority of the institutions still fall into the Soviet-type state-controlled category with almost no autonomy in decision making. These colleges and universities are required to have the MES approve all their decisions concerned with program development, assessment, and funding sources. There is also a new group of state-run universities that have acquired the status of “National University,” which gives them such decision making autonomy, allows them to develop and offer their own doctoral programs (the area traditionally controlled and administered by the MES), and become centers of research (European Commission, n.d.; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006). Finally, there is a growing number of private HEIs that have to meet the state accreditation and licensing requirements, while maintaining autonomy from the government in their decision making process.

In light of the high levels of corruption in Ukraine’s HEIs, the lack of institutional autonomy interconnects with the lack of transparency in system-wide and institutional quality assurance mechanisms (NTUU, 2004). Minister Vakarchuk emphasized the need to continue in the direction of

granting autonomy to HEIs and to systematically address existing roadblocks. One of such roadblock is in the area of legal frameworks that address the financing of HEIs. Current Ukrainian laws define educational institutions as nonprofit entities. However, this definition prohibits organizations with a nonprofit status to conduct any revenue-generating activities, even though these revenues would be put back into the educational institution and not bring any business profit at the end of the day. Ukraine's legislature (Verhovna Rada) needs to urgently address these legislative gaps, explicitly define fee-based nonprofit activity as a legitimate source of higher educational financing, and encourage HEIs to incorporate these into school budgets, along with the allocations from the state budget (which normally do not cover institutional budgetary needs). The minister underscored the existence of a "paradoxical situation", [ when], on the one hand, the state [did] not allocate funding that was sufficient for meeting the institutional needs. And on the other hand, the HIEs are not allowed to make profit from selling their inventions, because by doing so they lose their non-profit status (Vakarchuck, 2008).

In 2008, the minister Vakarchuck initiated a set of experiments that would pilot a new financing model in eight universities that have been granted autonomy from the MES. However, this initiative faced resistance justified by the above gaps in the legal framework. The minister took a different approach and, using Ukraine's signatory status under the Bologna Process agreements, initiated a change in the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* in a way that would communicate adherence to the Bologna Process standard for institutional autonomy. (Vackarchuck, 2008). He also stressed the importance for the HIEs' board of governors to move beyond a "ritualistic gesture" of compliance with reforms. The minister em-

phasized the crucial need for developing a new model for quality assurance control of HEIs and to develop new performance evaluation criteria of HEIs that would not be artificial but meet international standards for assessment and evaluation (Vakarchuck, 2008). An additional element of institutional autonomy is the mandate to increase student participation in the administration of HEIs through development of student government that goes beyond butaforical compliance with the Bologna Process agreements.

This snapshot of key ideas in the minister Vakarchuck's address regarding Ukraine's Bologna Process progress strongly suggests that, in 2005-2009 period, quality assurance remained one of the critical issues in Ukraine's higher education reforms. It illustrates that for Ukraine to meet the Bologna Process objectives regarding quality assurance (particularly, internal quality assurance), national policies needed to be put in place to encourage and reward an internal culture of excellence and innovation (NTUU, 2004). Additionally, it would positively impact educational reforms, if private HEIs deliberately used their autonomy for evolving as flexible, competitive, and socially responsible organizations (Tempus Program, 2008; Tempus Program, 2009). This, in turn, called for another policy change that would clearly define and enhance transparency within the state-private higher education relationship. The national policies could be also instrumental if they incorporated the Bologna Process values and explicitly encouraged HEIs towards institutional (national and international) collaboration, exchange, and partnerships and promote a culture of quality in all institutional dimensions. Policy instruments could also be instrumental in recognizing, rewarding, and enhancing institutional cultures toward greater quality and transparency.

*Has or Has not Ukraine's Participation in the Bologna Process Led to More Transparency?*

There are many reasons to believe that, in the context of policy reforms and national strategic objectives, post-2009 Ukraine could continue more wholeheartedly with the Bologna Process. This paper presented policy aspects of the Bologna Process that could have been instrumental to developing national policies that encourage transparency through quality assurance, evaluation, and investment by HEIs in an internal culture of quality. Participation of Ukrainian educators in exchanges and first-hand experience of the transparency and internal culture of quality in European Universities (in projects funded through the Tempus program) also brought positive and hopeful results (Tempus Program, 2008). However, in 2005-2009, these programs affected a comparatively small number of individual faculty members and universities - too small to sustain a systemic change in quality assurance throughout Ukraine's higher education. Additionally, although the Tempus program had an active stream of funding in 2009 that was aimed at addressing structural changes (including institutional quality assurance), very few Ukrainian HEIs applied for these programs. Ukraine's government could have addressed this disconnect by encouraging educators to be strategically involved in internationalization that goes beyond partnership and collaboration at the level of colleges and universities, and by incorporating this emphasis into strategic national priorities for developing the capacity and research potential of Ukraine's higher education.

Given that Ukraine has a centralized system of education, it is crucial that such change is facilitated by the central structures. At the same time, their involvement has to go beyond the mechanistic translation

of the degrees offered by the old higher education system, towards meeting the standards and goals articulated by the Bologna process agreements. This means that in 2009, the MES and its leadership (beyond minister Vakarchuck) needed to reconsider their own leadership philosophy and take on a more facilitative role that would encourage bottom-up involvement and participatory, collaborative approach, in order to create interest and a sense of urgency in committed participation by the HEIs.

Unfortunately, as indicated at the beginning of this paper, Ukrainian politics still heavily depends on individuals in key positions. Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuck was a true reformer, who understood the global and local dimensions of the Bologna Process. The instability of Ukrainian politics and the outcomes of the 2010 presidential elections brought to power a new and controversial (Kuzio, 2010) Minister of Education and Science Dmytro Tabachnyk (whose formal title later became *Minister of Education, Science, Family, and Sport*). Minister Tabachnyk is not as determined, as his predecessor, to implement Bologna Process reforms and create a more transparent higher education in Ukraine. On the contrary, the recent policy decisions indicate the move in the opposite direction. These include changes in the Independent Testing System that would allow colleges and universities "consider" the testing results and making admission process more vulnerable to subjective views of the reportedly corrupt university admission committees. In addition, in 2011, for the first time, students who have attended preparatory college programs will be privileged with 20 bonus points in addition to their independent testing scores during the admissions process at the intended university of students' choice (Orobets', 2010. Tsjats'ko, 2010). This, in fact, legalizes the university preparatory tu-

toring making admissions nepotism appear totally appropriate. Among other examples are the new minister's policy decisions to limit the number of government subsidized spots at public universities. On the one hand, the ministry needs to address the fact that currently, Ukrainian HEIs produce in great numbers graduates with degrees that do not meet the needs of Ukraine's economy and demands of its labor market. On the other hand, the means it chooses to decrease this number by 10% nationwide (and thus decrease direct financing to HEIs) seem to lie along the political lines. For example, while progressive Lviv National University is facing cuts in the number of government subsidized spots by 20,5% in on-campus and by 55% in distance education, instead of the 10–15% cuts promised by the ministry (Svidomo Agency, 2011). In contrast, Kyiv National University that has a similar number of students - but a more conformist leadership - lost to this funding decrease only 17,9% (Svidomo Agency, 2011).

Finally, the Ministry of Education, Science, Family, and Sport under the minister Tabachnyk's leadership has produced a controversial "Draft of Law on Education", which has been criticized by the opposition, as well as by the ruling Party of Regions representatives. According to the president Yanukovych's representative in the Ukrainian Parliament, Yuriy Myroshnychenko, "the draft is regulatory in nature, which increases HEIs' dependence from the ministry and decreases motivation of employers in collaboration. It does not provide for creation of a competitive environment in the educational market, for higher quality of teaching, and is not aimed at reforming of higher education" (Osvita Portal, 2011). Criticism has also come from the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science, as the Draft of Law on Education does not resound the calls of the president to provide

for HEIs' autonomy and to move Ukrainian universities in to the ranks of the world's best universities (Osvita Portal, 2011).

Although Ukraine's attempts to reform its higher education are yet to become an authentic movement (Atanasov, 2011), many Ukrainian educational leaders and researchers have a wealth of ideas and experience to move the higher education reform in the direction that would benefit the country as whole and its people. Many of these educators took part in the educational forum titled *Educational reforms and the Bologna Process and autonomy of HEIs* in March, 2011. Studying views of such individual thinkers and practitioners on educational transformations in Ukraine, as well as transformational leadership practices applied by a small number of leaders in Ukraine's universities and aimed at greater transparency and democratization of higher education are recommended for the future research, in order to navigate the mechanisms for democratic transition in education and development of educational policy in Ukraine and, possibly, in other post-Soviet states.

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